

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 05879 182216Z
ACTION ARA-14

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E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR, AR, CI
SUBJECT: MORE ON THE BEAGLE CHANNEL

REF: BUENOS AIRES 5216

1. INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE CONFIRMS FACTS AND CHRONOLOGY
IN BUENOS AIRES REFTEL. DR. JULIO FILIPPI WILL ATTEND DISCUSSIONS
BA BEGINNING JULY 20. SPECIAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR CARLOS BUSTOS
WILL ATTEND "JUST IN CASE" ANTARCTIC INTERESTS BECOME INVOLVED.

2. ON THE EVE OF THE MEETING THE GOC ISSUED SUPREME DECREE
416. IT DEFINES THE STRAIGHT BASE LINES FOR THE CHILEAN
ARCHIPELAGO FROM 41 DEGREES SOUTH LATITUDE (APPROXIMATELY
PUERTO MONTT) SOUTH AND AROUND THE HORN, ENDING AT POINT XX
AS ASSIGNED BY THE 1977 ARBITRATION TO THE MOST EASTERLY
MID-POINT OF THE BEAGLE CHANNEL. THE DECREE HAS OBVIOUS
IMPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINING MARITIME RIGHTS EAST AND SOUTH
OF THE CHANNEL. IT USES THE BARNEVELT ISLANDS AS ONE OUTER
REFERENCE POINT. IN ADDITION THE DECREE REAFFIRMS THE PERPETUAL
NEUTRALITY AND FREE NEVIGATION OF THE STRAITS OF MAGELLAN.

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3. TWO INCIDENTS OCCURED IN THE AREA OF THE BEAGLE CHANNEL DURING
JULY WHICH POINT UP THE HEIGHTENED SENSITIVITIES OF THE CHILEANS
TO EVENTS IN THIS REMOTE AREA OF THE WORLD. THE RESEARCH VESSEL
HERO WAS DOING RESEARCH ON EAST SHORE OF BAHIA YENDEGAIA
AN INLET NORTH OF BEAGLE CHANNEL WHEN TWO CARABINEROS (NATIONAL
POLICEMEN) FIRED THEIR GUNS IN THE AIR TO ATTRACT THE ATTENTION
OF THE COMBINED CHILEAN/AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC SHORE PARTY.

THE
CARABINEROS EXAMINED FOR SEVERAL HOURS ALL DOCUMENTS PRESENTED BY
THE SCIENTISTS AND CHILEAN PILOT OF THE VESSEL BEFORE PERMITTING
THE SHIP TO RESUME ITS ACTIVITIES. THEY VERIFIED BY RADIO ALL
DOCUMENTATION.

4. POSSIBLY RELATED TOO IS THE PUBLICATION BY THE MINISTRY
OF INTERIOR JULY 11 OF SUPREME DECREE 576 TURNING OVER TO THE
CHILEAN NAVAL AUTHORITIES CONTROL OF THE ENTRY AND EXIT OF ALL
FOREIGNERS ONTO THE ISLAND OF NAVARINO. THIS ISLAND IS ACROSS
THE BEAGLE CHANNEL FROM ARGENTINA AND ITS MAIN TOWN PUERTO WILLIAMS
IS CONSIDERED A TOURIST ATTRACTION AS THE SOUTHERMOST PERMANENT
SETTLEMENT IN THE WORLD.

5. COMMENT: THE LARGER PROBLEM SURROUNDING THE BEAGLE CHANNEL
DISPUTE INCLUDES THE CONFLICTING CLAIMS OF CHILE AND ARGENTINA
TO THE ANTARCTIC, THE POSSIBLE PRESENCE OF OIL AND GAS DEPOSITS
IN THIS DISPUTED AREA, AND ARGENTINA'S PERENNIAL CONCERN ABOUT
A "TWO OCEAN CHILE."

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